

I am writing to express my strong disapproval of any relaxation or elimination of the public interest limits on media ownership. Localism and diversity are the cornerstones of a democratic media system, and we cannot afford to compromise them in any way.

Few could doubt the obvious truth that media ownership matters and determines the content we receive over the public airwaves. We need look no farther than the recent scandal over ABC's "docudrama" about the 9/11 attacks which willfully distorted history about a national tragedy for political reasons. We need local broadcast station owners who will serve the local public interest not those of faraway corporate owners. Stewardship of the public airwaves is a very serious responsibility that merits true public accountability.

Limits on media consolidation have been a bulwark against the concentration of economic power in the marketplace of ideas -- a critical part of balancing the public service mission of the media with their private profit motive. Our democracy requires the free flow of information from a broad range of diverse voices.

Media consolidation has already led to declines in local and minority ownership as well as the homogenization of content in radio and television. Permitting cross-ownership of newspapers and broadcast stations, or allowing further concentration in local television markets, will only worsen the problems we already have.

When the FCC attempted to weaken and remove media ownership limits in 2003, millions of Americans rose up in protest. Congress and the courts ultimately intervened to turn back that misguided regulatory process.

Now that these same rules are being reconsidered, the FCC should stand firm with the public against further concentration of media ownership in the hands of the few. A vote against media consolidation is a vote for democracy.

\*\*As you may have already guessed, the above statement is "canned". Be that as it may, I DO agree with it. Now here's my personal opinion. It's almost impossible to turn on any major tv/radio news source and expect to hear objective reporting of the news. You people ought to be ashamed of yourselves for giving away the fourth estate to corporate conglomerates who are interested only in selling more widgets and lining the pockets of CEOs. The news that is reported is often slanted. And the 'hard' newshour is non-existent except for what is found on PBS. News now is the equivalent of reporting on 'human interest' stories and Hollywood marriages, divorces, and who's on what reality show.

What happened to the news departments that produced the likes of Edward R. Murrow and Walter

Cronkite? Those news departments were tied to the bottom line. Now they are. And you see the result. Are you pleased? Are you satisfied with the pablum being fed to the American public.

Did I say you should be ashamed of yourselves?